

and vigorously denounced and praised. It remains the most profitable and the most perilous book that a father who would have his boy make a pleasing figure in the world can put into his hands."¹ Mrs. Oliphant in an article in Blackwood's states, "It is evident that Chesterfield meant no particular harm, that he was only recommending to his boy such conduct as became a young man of spirit, and would be to his credit and advantage. The same letters which convey also the best of advice, show the evidence of the tenderest anxiety. The glimpse herein afforded of the corruption of society is appalling."²

Craig in *Life of Chesterfield* makes the observation. "The Letters were written for a special person, and with a special purpose. It is not fair to describe them as that which they were never intended to be--a code of morality. They form simply an elementary textbook of diplomacy, and the moral questions are collateral issues. It is not too much to say there never was a period in which the morality of all professions stood lower than the early Georgian. If Chesterfield recommended the practice of gallantry to his son, he was merely advocating conformity with the object of encouraging vicious indulgence, but as the only means of acquiring those graces and that social influence which intercourse with a society could alone bestow."³ Dobson in *Eighteenth Century Vignettes* offers a charitable viewpoint, "....those to

1. Much Loved Books, Review of Letters.

2. Blackwood's Magazine, vol. CIII, May 1868, p 516.

3. Life of Chesterfield, p 285.